

JAMES K. POLK

1845 - 1849



James Polk was born in North Carolina in 1795. After graduating from the University of North Carolina, he was admitted to the bar in Tennessee, where he became prominent in state politics. He served as governor of Tennessee from 1839 until 1841.

Sarah Childress Polk was born in 1803 and grew up on a plantation near Murfreesboro. She received an education unusual for a woman in her time, so that when she married James Polk in 1824, she was well-suited to assist him his political career. The Polks had no children.



President James Polk was elected to the presidency in 1844. His administration achieved four major objectives: the acquisition of California, settlement of the Oregon question, reduction of the tariff, and establishment of an independent treasury. He waged a war with Mexico to successful conclusion. After one term as president, Polk retired to Nashville, where he died in June, 1849.

As wife of a politician, Sarah Polk helped her husband with his speeches and correspondence. When Polk was elected president, she attended the inaugural ball, but as a devout Presbyterian, she did not dance. Her entertainments as First Lady were famous for sedateness and sobriety. Sarah Polk died at Polk Place in Nashville in 1891.

Arizona Timeline

1846 to 1848 - Mexican War is fought by the U.S. Army of the West which takes control of New Mexico and California. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the war and the U.S. gains confirmation of its title to Texas as well as the annexation of California and New Mexico (which included Arizona to the Gila River).